

# morning tears newsletter

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## Editorial

A death punishment of a parent is always a traumatizing experience for a child. Even if the child did not have a good relation with the parent there will still be overwhelming feelings of doubt, guilt, confusion, sadness and anger. The child will in no case remain unharmed with the capital punishment of the parent. The environment is in most cases not helpful. The media publicly announce what the child has often kept so long secret. Most people will avoid the child, some people will blame the child and almost nobody will help the child. The exact date of the death punishment is often not clear. Therefore, children remain in a situation of insecurity with the sword of Damocles hanging above their head. A last visit is almost never a confirmed fact. Nearly all children make inside their heart preparations for a last encounter, but they never know if it will work. Often it is unclear where the bodies are buried or where the remains are kept. This is not helpful at all when it comes to the phase of accepting that the parent has passed away. It is nearly impossible to start with normally with the different phases of mourning.

Dearest friends, over the years morning tears has build up considerable first-hand experience in assisting children who goes through the pains of parental death punishment. We are and stay non-political and we do not comment on the justice system. However, we do fight for the children. That is why, on the last special meeting of the UN committee of the rights of the children morning tears explicitly asked that countries address the issues above. We know that clear information about time and location of death punishment, goodbye visits that allow for physical contact, a proper burial and access for to the place where the body or remains are buried or stored do make lot of difference for the emotional recovery process of the children.

You receive this letter because you are interested are you support morning tears. We would like to thank you. Without you we would never be able to learn that much from our kids. Without you we would never be able to give meaningful recommendations to the UN.

Koen Sevenants

General director morning tears

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## News

### Morning tears Emergency Prison Intervention – Pailin, Cambodia

Morning tears is currently engaged in a new emergency intervention project in Cambodia. 9 months ago, a new prison opened in Pailin, in the northeast of Cambodia, near Battambang. The prison is located in an old theatre with no windows and no ventilation. There is a makeshift kitchen at the entrance that has a tin roof and tin walls. Pailin was intended to serve as a temporary prison. However, today, Pailin prison is still being used and the conditions inside are disastrous.

To date, up to 39 children, 89 men, 27 women, and 5 newborn babies are living in the prison (this includes 5 full families). Of the 89 men, only 13 have actually been convicted of crimes, while all the others are waiting in pre-trial detention. Inside, they are kept in big animal-like cages, with no exposure to daylight or fresh air. The children are not allowed to leave, and they do not have any opportunities for education while they are imprisoned. The prison has no windows, only two toilets, and barely enough food to feed the inmates. The prison's budget is made only 3 months in advance, and the prison has only enough funding to feed 10 children. Italian NGO NAAA (*Network Aiuto Assistenza Accoglineinza*) is currently supplementing food rations for the rest of the children. Morning tears has decided to take immediate action to try to aid the undernourished and severely traumatized children.

The emergency intervention has the main objective of providing assistance for the children inside before the outbreak of diseases by providing food, hygiene supplies, and by sending all children above the age of 6 to school. This will take about 2 months to complete. In the long-term, morning tears hopes to reintegrate the Pailin children into their community by placement in kinship care, foster care, or small group homes.

Because no children deserve to live in these conditions and because we believe in children, help us to help them.

### Morning tears – Baodefood Partnership

In October, morning tears China teamed up with “Baode Gourmet Home Delivery,” a leading supplier of high-end imported food products to top-end food-service operations and a personal home delivery service in Beijing and Shanghai. Baodefood is selling Cabreiroa Spanish Mineral water and donating all proceeds to morning tears. Morning tears China is very grateful for this new partnership in allowing us to help more children.





## International Day of Children of Convicts

On November 27<sup>th</sup>, morning tears will launch the “International Day of Children of Convicts”. According to UNICEF, there are currently 2.2 billion children on our planet, of which at least 2% have a parent in prison. This means that the world has at least 44 million children with a parent in prison. And, according to the Chinese Ministry of Justice, there are approximately 600,000 children whose parents are convicted and in need of assistance in China.

The objectives of the International Day of Children of Convicts are multiple. First and foremost, it should point out the problems and difficulties that these children go through, not only in China where morning tears has its main projects, but all around the world. It should, in the process of awareness-building, sensitize governments and their officials around the world to the lack of consideration for the children of convicts.

Through this day, morning tears hopes to inform audiences worldwide on our principles, standards, and strategies for help and action in the field of child assistance. The International Day of Children of Convicts should also remind the general public of the importance of the role of volunteers in our mission and in our projects.

Several morning tears committee in Europe (Belgium, Denmark, Italy, and the Netherlands) will hold a visual and a public event on this day. For more information and to take part of the events, please visit [www.morningtears.org](http://www.morningtears.org)





# Morning tears' strategy

In the latest issue of the morning tears newsletter, we completed the review of morning tear's minimum standards for childcare and protection.

We now wanted to share with you another of our research-based tools: our child protection policy, which we follow in our centers and recommend to other organizations taking care of children.

In our structure there are three reasons why morning tears developed and implements a child protection policy and tool-kit: (a) our commitment to the UNCRC, (b) our commitment to adhere to our own 'minimum standards for children in protective care' and (c) for the protection of our staff, volunteers and morning tears as an organization.

The advantages of implementing child protection policies are the following:

## 1. Children are protected

No standards can offer complete protection for children, but following these standards minimizes the risk to children of abuse and exploitation.

## 2. Agency representatives are protected

By implementing these standards, all representatives will be clear about how they are expected to behave with children and what to do if there are concerns about the safety of a child.

## 3. The organization is protected

By implementing these standards organizations make clear their commitment to keeping children safe. The standards will help them to move towards best practice in this area and deter potential abusers from joining the organization.

We will in this issue take an interest in the staff and volunteers side of this tool, by presenting you the "Code of conduct for staff and volunteers working with children".

It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- Plan and organize the work and the workplace so as to minimize risks
- Be visible to others when working with children whenever possible. Apply the two adult rule whenever possible or arrange a suitable alternative
- Develop a culture where children can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly

Help children to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem

Staff and others must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse

Staff and others must avoid actions or behaviour that could be regarded as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:

- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade





## Morning tears at the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, 2011, morning tears made monumental progress in the field of children's rights through the presence of its founder and general director Koen Sevenants at a special one-day session of the United Nations Committee of the Rights of the Child. The session was convened in Geneva to acknowledge the world's growing group of already millions of children who have a parent in prison, and to involve the international human rights community in efforts to address the numerous problems these children face. More than 200 participants were present: representatives of justice departments, child protection services and some NGOs.

As it is in this world, the NGOs coming from the wealthiest countries were overrepresented. There were very few participants standing up for children in developing countries. In any case, the discussions were extremely productive. The overrepresentation of voices from developed countries was compensated for by giving morning tears significantly more time to contribute to the dialogue about the issues children face especially in developing countries. And that is exactly what morning tears did: children were recognized as the invisible victims of parental imprisonment.

Koen headed to the meeting with eight hopeful recommendations about the following fields: training, flow of information to the children of convicts, financial support to the families, visits to prison, babies and children in prison, the role of NGO's...

Of course, morning tears would have liked to have given more, but we had to choose strategically which ones to contribute, as there are so many people who must have time to speak at such meetings. Our recommendations were inspired by the pain and suffering that we have seen in the children we have tried to help over the last thirteen years, and especially by the first generation of children with whom we started, who taught us so much. It is with them that we first travelled from the arrest of the parents to the pre-trial phase, and then to the court verdict, to long-term imprisonment, eventual prison visits, and –sometimes—to complicated family reunions.

Morning tears is particularly proud after this UN CRC session, because *all* of our recommendations were adopted by the committee. This means that the UN will forward these recommendations to all the countries that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (these are all the countries in the world except for Somalia and the United States). Next, these countries will internally and formally discuss these recommendations and their implementation. In the next few years, these countries will provide feedback reports to the UN about which actions they have taken and which recommendations they have implemented in their effort to improve the situations of children who have a parent in prison.

Everywhere in the world there are children who have a parent in prison. Morning tears has always wanted this global issue to gain prominence on global agendas. And it is working. There is so much more to do, but we can also celebrate the real progress we have made.

Cheers!





## Aitongyuan Coming Home Project – Henan

The children of Aitongyuan were kept busy this summer and autumn, now having memories of a whole array of celebrations and excursions. During the summer, all of the Aitongyuan children took a group-trip to Ri Zhao (a city on the coast, complete with beach and sea) for a five day-long summer camp. Many of the children recall this as their favourite part of summer!

Once summer ended, the children were faced with the beginning of the new school year. Now, the caregivers are always busy; they are cooking before the children wake up, and with each child until they are fast asleep.

The children have also recently celebrated Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, or Moon Festival. This is one of the most important Chinese traditional festivals, and the children ate what is most typical and well-known food item associated with this festival: mooncakes.

Chinese National Day also occasioned an outing from Aitongyuan, into the city, Zheng Zhou. On that day, a brand new Cartoon Park opened, much to all the children's amusement.

Then, there were several birthdays to be celebrated, which was accomplished in one huge party that all the children participated in and loved. The children also visited their parents, which is always an emotional and important event.

Finally, thanks to our amazing donors, a new building has just been finished, and, to date, 12 children have moved in! Below is a picture of the beautiful result.





## Finances

Since its beginning, morning tears strives to be transparent to its donors concerning its finances and the way the funds are used in the different projects. We also always keep in mind the objective of low overhead budget, in order to use our funds to help and take care of as many children as possible. To achieve these objectives, morning tears follow international finances rules for its accounting. Therefore, morning tears has just started the process of having its financial accounts audited in China. We know that auditing reinforces the trust our donors have in us, as has been the case in Belgium, where we have already finished the auditing process. Morning tears is committed to the efficient and most beneficial use and allocation of donated funds, donors rest assured!

## Actualities

### **Children's rights take center stage at SAARC foreign ministers meeting**

Before the summit meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in November, several of the nations' foreign ministers met in Addu Atoll, the southernmost atoll of the Maldives, with a focus on development issues and especially children's rights. UNICEF Regional Director Daniel Tool was also present and commended the regional leaders for their commitment to children's rights. After this meeting, education, nutrition, and prevention of HIV/AIDS turned out to be the next key programs in the protection of children's rights in South Asia.

### **ECOWAS Pledges to Address Children's Rights Challenges in West Africa**

In October, the President of the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS), His Excellency James Victor Gbeho, pledged to strengthen ECOWAS' legal and other relevant instruments to address children's rights issues in the region. The region, which was frustrated in the past by illiteracy, poor access to education, and a lack of civil services, now stands better chances of success with big improvements in information technology. The President has also expressed the willingness of ECOWAS to deepen its relationship with UNICEF in improving birth registration in the region.

### **UNESCO 10,000 Principals Leadership Programme**

In September, the United Nations educational agency embarked on a new partnership to train thousands of school principals across the world, beginning in Kenya, Ghana and India. This project can potentially benefit up to 10 million children in the future.

This initiative, conceived by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Varkey GEMS Foundation (a not-for-profit education organization) is known as the "10,000 Principals Leadership Programme."

According to UNESCO, school principals in many developing countries receive very little leadership and development training. The new initiative foresees the training of 10,000 principals in the three countries targeted over four years.



### **morning tears Belgium**

BNP Paribas Fortis  
 Account No: 001-4495454-65  
 IBAN: BE 18001449545465  
 BIC/SWIFT: GEBABEBB

### **morning tears Netherlands**

ABN Amro  
 Account No: 45.75.13.764  
 Stichting Morning Tears Nederland  
 IBAN: NL81ABNA0457513764  
 BIC/SWIFT: ABNANL2A

### **morning tears Spain**

La Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions  
 Account No: 2100.0233.99.0200332319  
 IBAN: ES28 21000233990200332319  
 BIC/SWIFT: CAIXAESBXXX

### **morning tears Denmark**

Danske Bank  
 Account No: 10490189 Reg. Nr. 1551  
 IBAN: DK14 3000 0010 4901 89  
 BIC/SWIFT: DABADKKK

### **morning tears in China**

Bank of China, Beijing Xi Cui Lu Sub-Branch  
 [中国银行北京西翠路支行]  
 Account No: 4160-3000-1880-2623-90  
 Beneficiary: Guo Zhi Hong (郭志弘)  
 BIC/SWIFT: BKCHCNBJ110

*morning tears rebuilds the world for children who have lost their own world.*

**morning tears** rebuilds the world for children who have suffered or are suffering heavy emotional pain.

We focus particularly on:

- children whose parents are in prison;
- children whose parents have been sentenced to death;
- children who have been abused or neglected;
- orphans;
- children who haven't been registered at birth, and thus have no rights;
- street children.

**morning tears** has been operating since 1999 on an informal basis without legal structure. However, in March 2005 **morning tears** became a formal non-profit organization registered under Belgian Law. Currently, **morning tears** has offices in Belgium, Spain, The Netherlands, Denmark, France, Italy, the USA and China.

**morning tears** is run mainly by volunteers. These volunteers are mostly professionals from the social sector or development aid workers, although we also have journalists and engineers in our group.

The running costs of **morning tears** are kept very low, so that donations can go almost entirely to the children in need.